

SWAM TWENTY MILES.

And She Kept Her Helpless Father Afloat Until Rescued.

On a pleasant morning in summer some fifteen years ago a little schooner slipped her moorings at Laupahoehoe, Hawaii, and started on her voyage to Honolulu. So small was the little craft that her only crew was one slender girl, the daughter of the captain. She had been sailing with her father since she was so small that he had to place a box for her to stand on when he wished her to hold the wheel while he handled the sails if by chance any change of course was necessary.

Kalili was about fifteen, a tall, slender girl, whose brown cheek was round and ruddy with the rich blood which leaped through her veins, for Kalili, having been reared in the open air, most of the time on the broad ocean, was strong and healthy, and well able to do the work required of her on the schooner. When they left Laupahoehoe the sun shone brilliantly, but old Kalamanu shook his head and looked gravely toward a bank of black clouds which were piled up high above the top of lofty Mauna Loa. Kalili cared little for her father's misgivings. She was anxious to get away, for the next day was a holiday, and she wished to reach Honolulu in time to enjoy herself with her companions.

While she stood holding the wheel and keeping the little craft on its course, she was dreaming of the luanu to which she had been bidden and thinking of the bright leis which she would weave in her dusky hair and hang around her dimpled shoulders. Her holoku would be as pretty as any there, and she knew that at least one pair of eyes would see that leis and dress were both worn by a beautiful girl. Dreaming thus, she did not notice the change which was coming over the sky—did not see the white caps, which showed that the wind was raising swiftly and would soon sweep across the wide channel with resistless force.

The pleasant islands of the southern sea are not always serene and placid. Sometimes the kona comes howling and shrieking down the dark canyons and through the narrow gorges, smiting everything before it to the ground. When it comes God help the hapless craft which is in its road. God only can help, for the blows which the wind and waves deal upon the tossing, writhing vessel are heavy enough to drive it bodily beneath the waters. Kalamanu had neither holoku nor lei to dream of, so he had seen the kona coming and had been preparing to meet it to the best of his ability. He had given the girl his orders in quick, sharp tones, and she had mechanically obeyed them, but without realizing what the change of course meant. Suddenly she was awakened, and roughly, from her dreams. A wall of white water rose high above the side of the vessel and dashed down upon the deck, drenching the girl to the skin.

With the shock she came back to the present, and, looking around, saw that what but a short time before was a smooth, placid stretch of blue water was now a foaming, raging sea, dashing its waves high above the low rail of the schooner. The wind whistled and howled around her ears. She could scarcely hear her father as he shouted his orders to her from a few feet distant. Filled with terror, she kept the vessel on its course, but only by the exertion of her whole strength.

Louder and louder roared the wind, and higher yet climbed the waves. The sun still shone brightly above her head, seeming to make the scene more frightful than it would have appeared beneath a cloudy sky. A kona may blow for days and it may pass in an hour. Their only hope was that this one had arisen so suddenly that it would subside as quickly.

Kalamanu watched the black cloud which had first given him warning of coming trouble, and saw, to his joy, that it was passing away. Evidently the kona would not last many hours, but could the little vessel, built for sailing on a summer sea, stand that terrible wrenching and twisting even for that short time?

She was new and reasonably strong, but the blows she had suffered might well have destroyed a stronger vessel. He could only hope for the best and hold on to the rail until the wind fell. He had done all that was possible to save his vessel. God must do the rest. The wind was surely sinking, the waves did not rise so high above his head. The worst was over and he turned his head to speak to the girl, who still clung to the wheel.

Then came a crash. An immense wave had broken over the stern, filled the little hold and the little schooner was sinking under their feet.

Kalili was as much at home on water as on land, like all Hawaiians, and as soon as she caught her breath she rose in the water and looked about for something to aid her in her fight with the sea, and for her father, for whose safety she had no fear. But she saw him slowly sinking beneath the angry waves. He had been injured by a blow from something as the water dashed across the deck, carrying whatever loose articles still remained on the deck.

Swimming swiftly to his side, Kalili caught hold of him and raised his head above the water. He was not insensible, and in a few moments was able to support himself on the water, but he had been injured so severely that he was unable to swim.

They were at least twenty-five miles from land, alone on the tossing sea, without even a broken oar to assist them, and she, a helpless girl, must do what she could to save not only her own life, but her injured father. Kalamanu had put on his oilskin coat and his sea boots when first the waves began to break above the rail, and these added to his weight.

Kalili knew that she could never hope to keep him afloat so weighted down. The coat and boots must be removed. The man could move his arms

feebly, and he assisted her in removing the heavy coat. Then she dove down behind him, and after many attempts succeeded in getting the boots off.

Then she started to swim back over the course they had sailed that day. Think of it! Alone, twenty-five miles from land, with the sea a tossing, tumbling waste of water. She determined to swim to land, and not only to swim to that distant land, but to carry with her the almost helpless old man.

The wind had died entirely away and the sea was rapidly subsiding. That much was in her favor. Then, too, she knew the next morning the steamer Like-Like would cross the channel on her way from Hilo to Honolulu. If she could keep afloat, could see the steamer, could make those on board see her, then she might hope for rescue. Keeping her eyes fixed on the distant mountain, she swam on and on, sometimes towing her father by his arm thrown across her shoulders, sometimes pushing him forward with her breast and using both arms, sometimes holding him with one hand and swimming with the other.

Hour after hour passed. She became exhausted, and, turning upon her back, floated for a while to rest her strained arms and shoulders; then again she swam on, on toward that dim speck against the darkening sky which she knew was mighty Mauna Loa. That must be her landmark until she came near enough to the shore to see the lower land. No matter what point she reached, only the solid land, no matter whether near or far from her starting point.

Night fell; but, watching the stars, she kept her face turned toward the place where, miles away, lay the longed-for land.

Kalamanu, while day lasted, was able to hold his head above the waves, but soon after nightfall he became too weak to do even this. Finding that he was failing he told his brave daughter to leave him and strive to save her own life. She refused; both or neither should reach the land. Together they would meet their fate, good or evil. When he became too weak even to keep his face above water she tore a strip from her single garment and tied it so as to keep his head on her shoulders. On and on she toiled.

Night passed, morning came and found her, with aching arms and shoulders, still swimming, slower now, toward the distant shore. Up came the sun, and the torture of heat were added to her sufferings. Her arms, face and shoulders were blistered by the scorching rays until the touch of the salt water was agony. Still she pressed on. Noon came, nearly twenty-four hours since she began that long fight against death.

An hour passed and still no succor. No sign of a steamer or other vessel, and the distant mountain seemed as far off as ever. For the first time the heroic girl began to despair. She felt that she was growing weaker. Nothing had passed her lips since the morn-